

[A crocodile shot recently in the Powai Lake near Bombay by Mr. McCann of the Society's staff, had the right fore leg missing from well above the middle or the humerus. It was apparently a very old injury and did not seem either to hinder the progress or affect adversely the general condition of the reptile.—Eds.]

XXVIII.—AN ENCOUNTER WITH A HAMADRYAD
(*N. BUNGARUS*).

I was in the office one afternoon and heard my clerk's dog making a fiendish yapping down at his quarters. On enquiring the cause thereof I was informed that it was fighting a big cobra. Although cobras have been captured on the lower lying estates in this district I had not previously seen one here and was somewhat sceptical as there are plenty of very large rat snakes about. However, when I had finished my work in the office I went to investigate and found about four coolies standing round and the dog still keeping up its cacophony. Although at the first glance nothing was visible as the 'conflict' was in amongst some grown up tea, but upon a closer approach I was able to discern a section of the snake about 3 ft. off the ground between two bushes and it sent me hot foot back to the bungalow for my gun. I found I only had some old No. 8 shot cartridges and so took along my .380 revolver. On arriving back I thought I would see if I could see the head and to this end crawled on hands and knees under the tea and saw the dog barking only a few inches away from it. I drove it away and had four shots at the snake with the revolver but all missed—a lamentable occurrence. I then thought I would give it a shot with the gun and this did not have much effect other than to make it come down sluggishly to earth when I managed to hit it with a revolver bullet in the neck. One or two facts emerge from the hunt. Firstly the extreme sluggishness and apparent docility of the snake—I never saw its hood expanded once. Secondly the striking proof that a snake is deaf to ordinary sound; it never turned an inch at the four revolver shots fired a few feet away from its head, from which one presumes it neither heard the dog; and lastly the time it took to die, although the backbone was broken at the neck it took half an hour at least before it was dead. It taped 10 ft. 4 in. before skinning and 11 ft. 6 in. after and was a male. There were numerous ticks under its scales and a large leech was found adhering to it.

I cannot account for the dog getting away with it as it did, as I was told the Hamadryad, which it proved to be, was in the open when the dog found it and the King Cobra is reputed to be the fiercest and most dangerous of Indian snakes. The bands on this snake were not well defined.

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June 25, 1936,